

Message Text

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AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 11663

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: YVES GUENA AND THE UDR

REF: PARIS 10552

SUMMARY: YVES GUENA, CURRENTLY NATIONAL DELEGATE OF THE UDR, WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE ELECTED NEXT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PARTY AT ITS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING ON APRIL 24. GUENA'S ELECTION INDICATES A REASSERTION OF CONSERVATIVE GAULLISM IN THE FACE OF WHAT MOST GAULLISTS CONSIDER TO BE A LACK OF LEADERSHIP ON THE PART OF THE PRESIDENT. THE PARTY ITSELF, HOWEVER, IS DIVIDED, WITH ITS TWO MAIN TENDENCIES -- DEBRE AND CHIRAC -- DIFFERING OVER MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES. NEVERTHELESS THE CLASSIC PRINCIPLES OF GAULLISM CONTINUE TO BIND THE PARTY AT ITS BASE, AND THE VIGOROUS LEADERSHIP OF GUENA COULD DRAW DISPARATE ELEMENTS TOGETHER. THERE ARE RUMORED DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND GUENA, WHO SEEMS TO HAVE THE GREEN LIGHT TO GO AHEAD
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AND REAFFIRM THE UDR AS THE DOMINANT ELEMENT IN THE MAJORITY. THE UDR STILL SEES ITSELF AS INCORPORATING THE DESTINY OF FRANCE, BUT MUCH OF ITS MUSCLE-FLEXING MAY BE BLUFF. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CANDIDATES: ON APRIL 24 THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE UDR (GAULLIST) PARTY WILL MEET IN PARIS TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO ANDRE BORD, OUTGOING SECRETARY GENERAL (REFTTEL). IN ALL LIKELIHOOD YVES GUENA, CURRENTLY NATIONAL DELEGATE IN CHARGE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND TO DATE THE ONLY OFFICIALLY DECLARED CANDIDATE, WILL BE ELECTED TO THE POST. ALBIN CHALANDON, UNTIL RECENTLY RUMORED TO BE THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE, HAS DROPPED OUT OF THE RACE ENTIRELY. CALLED A POLITICAL DILETTANTE BY SOME, ALOOF OR EVEN CORRUPT BY OTHERS, HIS CANDIDATURE RAN INTO STRONG OPPOSITION AMONG UDR DEPUTIES, WHO ARE SUSPICIOUS OF HIS SUPPOSED ATLANTICISM.

2. YVES GUENA: FIFTY-THREE YEARS OLD, MARRIED WITH SEVEN CHILDREN, GUENA, AFTER GRADUATION FROM ENA IN 1947, JOINED THE COLONIAL SERVICE AND WENT TO MOROCCO, WHERE HE REMAINED TEN YEARS. FROM THERE HE MOVED INTO THE CABINET OF THEN MINISTER OF JUSTICE MICHEL DEBRE, UNTIL 1959, WHEN HE WAS NAMED HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE IVORY COAST (RUMOR HAS IT HE WAS RECALLED AT THE REQUEST OF PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, WHO TOOK A PERSONAL DISLIKE TO GUENA). HE WAS FIRST ELECTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON THE GAULLIST TICKET IN 1962, AND KEPT HIS SEAT UNTIL PRIME MINISTER POMPIDOU NAMED HIM MINISTER OF POST OFFICES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN 1967. SINCE THEN, HE HAS HELD FOUR OTHER MINISTERIAL POSTS, INCLUDING THAT OF INDUSTRY, AND BEEN A DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UDR. IN ADDITION, HE HAS BEEN MAYOR OF PERIGUEUX IN THE SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE SINCE 1971. GUENA IS THOUGHT TO BE SOMEWHAT ALOOF AND DISDAINFUL, BUT UNDENIABLY INTELLIGENT. HIS WIFE IS THE STEP-SISTER OF MICHEL DEBRE, AND THIS RELATIONSHIP IS BELIEVED TO HAVE SERVED GUENA WELL IN HIS CAREER. IRREPROACHABLY GAULLIST, GUENA IS THE AUTHOR OF "L'ENJEU", A RECENTLY-PUBLISHED MANIFESTO THAT OUTLINES THE BASIC TENETS OF THE UDR.

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3. THE OLD GUARD AWAKES: GUENA, WHILE NOT A CLASSIC "BARON", COMES IDEOLOGICALLY CLOSE TO DESERVING THAT EPITHET. IN AN APRIL 24 NEWS CONFERENCE HE DECLARED THAT NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND A "SOCIAL POLICY" (POLITIQUE SOCIALE) SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE BASIS OF GAULLIST DOGMA IN ORDER THAT THE UDR MIGHT "PRESERVE ITS POSITION AS A GREAT POPULAR PARTY." HIS NOMINATION THUS INDICATES A REASSERTION OF CLASSIC GAULLIST ETHICS IN THE FACE OF "GISCARDIZATION", "CHIRACIZATION", "CENTRALIZATION", AND "PRESIDENTIALIZATION." HIS PROBABLE ELECTION TO THE POST OF SECRETARY GENERAL IS INDICATIVE OF A NEW IMAGE OF STRENGTH THE PARTY WISHES TO PROJECT, CONFRONTED WITH VGE'S ATTEMPTS TO REMOLD

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THE PARTY IN HIS IMAGE.

4. WHAT IS A GAULLIST? THE UDR IN ONE SENSE IS PUL-
LING OFF A MASSIVE BLUFF: THE POKER HAND WILL NOT BE
REVEALED UNTIL AFTER THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.
IT IS ALL WELL AND GOOD FOR THE PARTY TO HAVE DECLARED
A FEW WEEKS AGO THAT IT IS SET TO TAKE OFF, THAT ITS
THREE MAIN DIRECTIVES WILL BE GETTING DOWN TO REAL
BUSINESS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, MOBILIZING TROOPS
ON A LOCAL LEVEL AND COORDINATING ACTION FOR THE 1977
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. BUT THE PARTY REMAINS NONETHELESS
DIVIDED INTO TWO MAIN CAMPS AND A NUMBER OF SPLINTER
GROUPS. ON ONE SIDE STANDS THE OLDER GENERATION,
EPITOMIZED BY DEBRE AND SANGUINETTI, WHICH SEEMS FOR
THE MOMENT TO BE ASSERTING ITSELF WITH RENEWED VIGOR.
ON THE OTHER SIDE STANDS THE CHIRAC CAMP, EPITOMIZED
BY DEPUTIES SIMON-LORIERE, RUFENACHT AND STATE SECRETARY
STIRN. YOUNGER, MORE LIBERAL, THEY ARE THE PARTY'S
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NEW BLOOD AND ITS HOPE OF TOMORROW. ELSEWHERE SUCH
GROUPS AS THE UNION OF YOUTH FOR PROGRESS (ULTRA-
CONSERVATIVE) AND THE FRONT PROGRESSISTE (IN THE
OPPOSITION) ARE CONSTANTLY NEEDLING THE PARTY FOR ONE

ALLEGED BETRAYAL OR ANOTHER. MEANWHILE PEOPLE LIKE CHABAN-DELMAS, JEAN CHARBONNEL (MAYOR OF BRIVE) AND EVEN MICHEL JOBERT (EX-GAULLIST) FALL INTO CATEGORIES OF OPPOSITION TO THE PARTY SO INDIVIDUAL THAT THEY DEFY DESCRIPTION.

5. CHIRAC AND THE PARTY: PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC AS "COORDINATOR OF THE MAJORITY" IS OSTENSIBLY ABOVE POLITICKING FOR HIS OWN PARTY, BUT IN FACT HE REMAINS ITS MOST ACTIVE FORCE. HE WANTS TO GIVE IT A BEAUTY PACK, FRESHEN UP ITS IMAGE, PLACE A HEAVIER ACCENT ON YOUTH. AT THE SAME TIME HE WISHES, PERHAPS IN ORDER TO CONSOLIDATE THE UDR MORE WITH THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS AND THE CENTRISTS, TO BROADEN THE BASE OF THE PARTY BY HELPING IT REACQUIRE ITS OLD POPULAR (WORKER) IMAGE. EDGAR FAURE AND SENATOR BILLOTTE, LEADERS OF THE GAULLIST MOVEMENT FOR SOCIALISM BY PARTICIPATION, HAVE ALLEGEDLY BEEN CHARGED WITH THE TASK OF STRENGTHENING THE PARTY'S LEFT FLANK. (THIS IS DISTINCT FROM VGE'S ATTEMPTS TO WOO RIGHT-LEANING LEFTISTS BY LIBERALIZING HIS POLICIES). IF TRUE, THIS MAY DISTANCE CHIRAC FURTHER FROM THE BARONS.

6. A UDR PERSONALITY: THE PICTURE MOUNTS UP TO ONE OF FOOT-STAMPING COMBINED WITH A VERY REAL FEAR; FOOT-STAMPING BECAUSE NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE SEEM TO BE LISTENING TO THE PARTY ANYMORE (THOUGH GUENA HAS SAID IT MUST BE A "FORCE OF SUPPORT AND PROPOSITION"), FEAR BECAUSE THE GAULLISTS, OR AT LEAST THE OLDER GENERATION, ARE SINCERELY CONVINCED THAT FRANCE IS GOING TO THE DOGS AND THAT VGE'S SUPPOSED FLABBY LIBERALISM IS ENTIRELY RESPONSIBLE. IN SPEAKING WITH UDR DEPUTIES AND OTHER PARTY PERSONALITIES, ONE INVARIABLY SENSES A CLARITY OF PURPOSE COMBINED WITH OUTRAGE OVER THE COUNTRY'S "MISDIRECTION AND MISMANAGEMENT." CONSPICUOUS BY ITS ABSENCE FROM THE DEBATE AT THE UDR PARLIAMENTARIANS' MEETING IN SAINT-JEAN-DE-LUZ IN EARLY APRIL WAS ANY CONFIDENTIAL

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CLEAR MENTION OF THE TWO MAIN GISCARDIAN PROJECTS: CAPITAL GAINS TAX REFORM AND CORPORATE REFORM. PARTY MEMBERS ARE FLATLY CONVINCED THAT GOF MUST APPLY ITSELF TO THE REAL PROBLEMS AT HAND, INFLATION AND UNEMPLOY-

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MENT, IF THERE IS TO BE ANY HOPE OF THE CURRENT
MAJORITY'S STAYING IN POWER.

7. CONCLUSION: FOR ALL ITS INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES THE
PARTY REMAINS UNITED OVER THE MAIN ISSUES SUCH AS
DEFENSE, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND CLOSE TIES TO THE
THIRD AND FOURTH WORLDS. THE UDR IS WORRIED, HOWEVER.
AS THE LARGEST BODY IN THE ASSEMBLY, WITH 173 DEPUTIES
AND BY FAR MORE ELDER STATESMEN OF GENUINE WORTH THAN
ANY OTHER PARTY IN FRANCE, IT CAN PUT ON A VERY CON-
VINCING SHOW OF FORCE. BUT THE RECENT CANTONALS REMAIN
A HARD REALITY (PARIS 7676). ACCORDING TO RECENT POLLS,
AN ESTIMATED SIXTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE YOUNG (18 TO 21)
FAVOR THE LEFT, AND TOMORROW IS PROBABLY NOT IN THE
HANDS OF THE GAULLIST ELDERS, HOWEVER NUMEROUS THEY BE.
IF GUENA CAN SUCCEED IN ATTRACTING THE YOUNG BY DIS-
TANCING HIMSELF SOMEWHAT (WHICH WILL BE DIFFICULT) FROM
THE DEBRE CAMP, PERHAPS HE WILL SUCCEED IN REACTIVATING
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THE PARTY. IF NOT ITS PROBLEMS MAY WORSEN. A RECENT
FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE IN "LE MONDE", ADMITTEDLY WRITTEN BY
A LEFT RADICAL (OPPOSITION), WAS ENTITLED
"AT THE SERVICE OF THE UDR OR OF FRANCE". THE AUTHOR
FEELS THAT GISCARD, THROUGH CHIRAC, IS SELLING OUT TO
THE GAULLISTS AND IN THE PROCESS DENIGRATING FRANCE.
THE LINE OF COMMUNICATION NOW RUNS FROM GUENA THROUGH
CHIRAC TO THE PRESIDENT. IF GISCARD IS IN FACT ACCOMMO-
DATING HIMSELF TO A MORE GAULLIST POINT OF VIEW ON SOME
ISSUES, THIS WILL BE FOUND IN THE RAPPORT, AS YET UN-
KNOWN, BETWEEN THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE PRIME
MINISTER. IF GUENA SIDES MORE OR LESS WITH CHIRAC (POST
HAS HEARD REPORTS OF DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN THEM), THE
PARTY CAN PROBABLY PULL ITSELF OUT OF ITS DOLDRUMS.

IF HE SIDES WITH THE OLD GUARD, THE PARTY WILL SUFFER.
AS A POLITICIAN GUENA MAY OPT FOR A HAPPY MEDIUM, BUT
YOU CANNOT FOOL ALL OF THE GAULLISTS ALL OF THE TIME.
THE CHOICES MADE WILL HAVE A DIRECT EFFECT ON THE LEGIS-
LATIVE ELECTIONS.
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